

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully solicited, in view of the following:

Base claims 1 and 7 define the following:

- a) strap structure including first and second elongated strap portions, said strap first portion extending in a generally longitudinal direction, said structure defining a through slit extending diagonally through the strap first portion at an angle α between 40° and 50° relative to said longitudinal direction,
- b) said strap first portion adapted to be wrapped about an ankle,
- c) said strap second portion extending through the strap first portion via the slit, and folded at the slit to extend downwardly and normal to said longitudinal direction and at one side of the ankle, then underfoot, and then upwardly at the opposite side of the ankle, for operative attachment and said first portion.

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Note that the slit is defined to extend through the strap first portion at the angle of between 40° and 50° relative to the longitudinal direction defined by the strap first portion 11a; that the strap second portion extends through the strap first portion via the slit angled to enable strap folding and re-direction from longitudinal to normal; that the strap second portion is folded at the slit to extend downwardly and normal to the longitudinal direction -----etc.

Ritchie clearly lacks the above structure, as he lacks a slit formed by his strap or straps and extending through his strap (he has no strap formed slit, as rings 24 and 26 are not formed by his strap(s); he has no slit through his strap(s) he does not fold his strap at a slit formed diagonally through a strap. (Note his Fig. 1 showing strap 8 without any fold at ring 26, and strap 14 without any fold at his ring 24. His structure is complex and costly, and disadvantageous since he must provide multiple straps, and rings 24 and 26 attached to his straps. There is no motivation shown to massively re-design his device into one strap, and to remove rings 24 and 26 and somehow form slits in his straps, for no good purpose, since he

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doesn't use his rings to enable strap redirected folding from longitudinal to normal direction. Also he lacks applicant's through slit specific angularity α as defined in claims 1 and 7.

Ritchie also lacks suggestion of the claims 4 and 5 hook and pile fasteners, as related to any slit through a strap; and he lacks any stiffeners at opposite sides of a slit, with cushioning at the stiffeners. His rings are bare. See also applicant's claims 10 and 12.

There is no basis in Ritchie to suggest the inherency referenced at page 3 of the Action, and concerning "operatively attaching" and "folding" as stated, since Ritchie so clearly lacks the structure now specified in applicant's claims, as amended, and argued above, and absent from Ritchie.

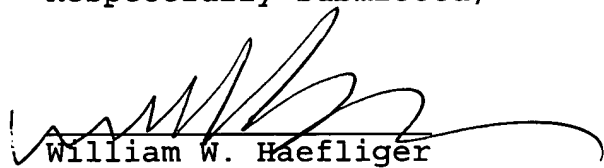
In view of the above argument, and the demonstration of applicant's simple and effective single strap device at the interview, it is believed and urged that the claims should now be allowable.

Applicant wishes to thank Examiners for their courtesy in granting the interview held on February 5, 2007, at which time the above were discussed, including novelty

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and unobviousness over the cited art, and unusual advantages
in operation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William W. Haefliger', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

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Docket 12,575